

FNS Farm to School Website, Email, and Site Visits

Purpose:

This instruction sets forth the policy regarding information based on the FNS Farm to School Website.

Scope:

Sponsors participating in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) and School Breakfast Program (SBP).

Description:

On Friday, December 18, 2009, the Child Nutrition Division released a Farm to School website located at <http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/F2S/Default.htm>, and a new email address specifically for Farm to School communications (farmtoschool@fns.usda.gov). At this time, the website contains general information about Farm to School, as well as the *Know Your Food, Know Your Farmer* initiative and the USDA Farm to School Tactical Team (Tactical Team). In the near future, the website will feature information on how to start Farm to School activities; how to purchase locally; policies related to Farm to School; solutions to overcoming obstacles; food safety; progress on the Tactical Team Initiative; and much more. We encourage you to visit the website frequently to learn about the latest events regarding Farm to School.

The purpose of the Tactical Team is to support local and regional food systems by facilitating linkages between schools and their local food producers. The Tactical Team will be visiting nine school districts of varied demographics and characteristics to analyze and assess variables that support or deter from the success of Farm to School activities. During the visits the Tactical Team would like to meet with school administrators (e.g., food service director, principal, superintendent, Agri-science program coordinator, etc.), farmers, and community partners to best understand the school's Farm to School activities and identify obstacles, trends, and best practices.

The Tactical Team has several goals related to the development mechanisms to assist schools in accessing local markets; enabling food producers to effectively service their local schools; and facilitating communication between interested stakeholders. We expect the varied site visits will assist the Tactical Team in meeting these goals.

Through the above listed website, the Tactical Team has provided school districts participating in the Child Nutrition Programs an opportunity to express their interest in being considered for a USDA Farm to School Tactical Team site visit. Once the district has submitted their request for consideration, the Tactical Team will respond via email as confirmation of the

request and seek to learn more about the school's Farm to School efforts through the food service director. The requests are due to FNS by January 31, 2010.

In 2010, the Tactical Team will identify the nine school districts to visit and will notify the Regional Offices of the selected visits. The Regional Offices can then work through the appropriate State Agency for notification of the Team's selection. We are expecting that school district interest will exceed our resources and abilities to visit nine sites in 2010; therefore, we plan to keep a database of all schools who requested a visit so that we can keep them up to date on any new Farm to School developments. Also, we will continue to keep everyone apprised of current Farm to School events and Tactical Team activities, including the site visits, through our website.

SOURCE: FNS MEMO, JANUARY 8, 2010.